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ABSTRACT

This chapter is part of a book that recounts the year's work at the Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) at Texas A & M University-Corpus Christi. Rather than an "elitist" laboratory school for the children of university faculty, the ECDC is a collaboration between the Corpus Christi Independent School District and the university with an enrollment representative of Corpus Christi's population. This chapter describes how the ECDC has successfully implemented its dual Spanish-English curriculum through: (1) defining the model to be used; (2) gradually phasing in the program; (3) developing instruction that reflects the population of the classroom; (4) using high-quality materials in each language of instruction; (5) having teachers committed to attaining bilingual education training; (6) employing dedicated administrators with a clear understanding of research as well as community needs; and (7) defining the role of elicited response in classroom communication using the second language. The chapter concludes with a discussion of student test scores. (Contains 30 references.) (EV)

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Chapter 2

A Dual Language Curriculum for Young Children

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PS 030593

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Bilingual and Dual Language Programs

The subject of bilingualism and the advantages and disadvantages of having students taught in two languages continue to be subjects of debate across the country. Several models of bilingual education have been promoted over the years; however, most recently, dual language instruction has been found to be an effective model that promotes bilingualism and biliteracy in young students. In dual language classrooms, Spanish first language (L1) and English only students follow the same curriculum, with instruction via the second language at least 50% of the time from kindergarten through sixth grade. The goal of the program is to develop strong bilingual and biliteracy skills in both groups of students. Each group acts as a linguistic model for the other (Cummins, 2000).

These programs provide an environment that promotes positive attitudes toward both languages and cultures and is supportive of full bilingual proficiency for both native and non-native speakers of English. Typical goals for dual language programs include linguistic, academic, and affective dimensions:

- Students will develop high levels of proficiency in their first language and in a second language.
- Students will perform at or above grade level in academic areas in both languages.
- Students will demonstrate positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors and high levels of self-esteem.

It is important to understand that this educational approach does not emphasize language development over academic and social development; the goal is development in all areas (Christian & Mahrer, 1992).

In dual language programs, students from both languages are grouped together so that they will have many opportunities to interact with one another. As documented by Baker & Prys-Jones (1998) and Cummins & Corson (1997), students educated for part of the day in a minority language do not suffer adverse consequences in the development of academic skills in the majority language.

There is a great deal of variety in the implementation of dual language bilingual education. Even the term used to refer to the programs of this type varies widely:

Two-way bilingual, developmental bilingual, bilingual immersion, double immersion, interlocking, and dual-language are some of the labels found (Christian & Mahrer, 1992).

There are two major models of dual-language programs. There are 90/10 and 50/50 programs that have been developed representing the time devoted to the minority and the majority language in the program. The 90/10 model aims to promote the language of lesser "prestige" as much as possible because it is the language that the child will encounter the lesser amount of time. The 50/50 model is based on the belief that both languages need to be acquired from the beginning, and that the best way to do this is to split the instructional time between the two. The available research suggests that both models can work well when they are implemented appropriately.

Thomas and Collier (1997b) found the following factors that have contributed to the success of dual language programs:

- Students participate for at least six years.
- The ratio of speakers of each language is balanced.
- The minority language is emphasized in the early grades.
- Instruction is excellent and emphasizes core academics.
- Parents have a strong, positive relationship with the school.

The Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMUCC) was established as a dual language school in September 1996. The center is a research-based lab school that houses a pre-kindergarten program for three-year-olds through third grade. The dual language curriculum has been developed using variations of the 50/50 dual language model. The two languages used at the center are English and Spanish. (See Chapter 1)

In the pre-kindergarten for three-year-olds, the alternate day language delivery system is in place. One day the instruction is in Spanish and the next day the lessons are in English. In the four-year-old and the five-year-old kindergarten program, a half-day 50/50 delivery system is used. At the third grade level, the alternate day delivery system is used, but only in certain content areas.

A well-planned and carefully implemented two-way dual language program provides the scaffolding that will result in very literate children in two languages. However, reading experiences can result in poor literacy development if a program does not address the

complex systems involved in literacy development for each language and provide the scaffolding between these multifaceted processes (Izquierdo, 2000).

Critical Components of Dual Language Programs

Though the needs of any successful program reflect the community and school specifically, there are several key components that are critical to success in dual language programs (Montague, 1997). These include: (a) defining the model to be used, (b) a gradual phase-in of the program, (c) development of instruction that reflects the population in the classroom, (d) quality materials in each language of instruction, (e) teachers committed to attaining bilingual education training, (f) dedicated administrators with a clear understanding of research as well as community needs, and (g) defining the role of elicited response.

Defining the Model

Different school-wide dual language models have been supported by research in the United States. The 90/10 model has been shown to be most successful for minority language learners (Thomas & Collier, 1997a). This model provides 90% of instruction in the minority language and 10% in English for the pre-school year. The program graduates to an 80/20 model in first grade, then a 70/30 in second grade, etc.

Teachers' lesson plans can be used as a basis for evaluating a curriculum model. They may choose to implement delivery of dual language differently in their classrooms. Some teachers provide instruction in one language according to the day of the week; some split the time of the instructional day according to hours. Several teachers have reported that a tangible reminder defines language division best for both teacher and students. These teachers use a recess bell, turn on a lamp, or put on a hat to signal a language change. In any case, bilingual educators agree that keeping the language model pure is essential for teachers in dual language programs. Some acceptable exceptions to this rule would be cultural storytelling or other activities where a less formal model is required by the curriculum. (For one such exploration, see Mejia, 1998.)

providing the most academic support for the least supported societal language (Grosjean, 1982; Krashen, 1996; Cummins, 1981). English speakers do not face the threat of losing their language or culture when they participate in a dual language program. Both groups of speakers hear television, radio, employees at businesses, and many more models of English on a daily basis. English speakers will not lose their native language or culture from dual language instruction, regardless of the model implemented.

Instruction Reflecting Population

Instead of having a balanced population of minority and majority language speakers, some dual language teachers find they are addressing a majority language group with perhaps only 1% to 10% of minority speakers who may already have developed minimal English skills. This places great linguistic responsibility on the teacher, deprives the student of peers who serve as language models, and ultimately affects the quality of the program (Montague, 1998). The importance of access to language peers has been examined thoroughly (Grosjean, 1982). International research throughout the history of bilingual education indicates that children are efficient language learners and their language abilities develop best in environments in which the language is necessary for communication and basic functioning (Krashen, 1996). The importance of a balanced population cannot be overstressed unless one is prepared to engage in Spanish as a second language instruction with a strict immersion model. In such a case, any Spanish speakers in the class will inevitably become bored and disengage quickly.

Materials

Some dual language programs begin before materials in each language have been purchased or have arrived, forcing the teachers to construct their own materials for the minority language. This can tax the success of the program quickly and send clear messages to children regarding the importance of each language. The value of materials in each of the languages represented in oral instruction should be clear if bilingualism for children is to include biliterate capabilities. As a practitioner researcher, Montague documented this need during a 1998 study. It is a topic that arises with much emotion

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Some bilingual teachers pair with English speaking teachers to create a dual language program for both groups of children. These opportunities provide the benefit of freeing bilingual teachers from the tendency to code-switch between languages in the interest of keeping teacher language modeling pure. This model also allows the inclusion of the talents of those monolingual English-speaking teachers who are dedicated to bilingualism for children. Code switching seems to come so naturally for many bilingual speakers that it presents an acknowledged struggle among many bilingual teachers.

Gradual Phase-In of the Program

Dual language instruction can vary from almost full immersion for English speakers (as with the 90/10 model), to balanced dual language instruction for a group that includes children at different points along the bilingual continuum (as with 50/50 instruction). Models for such programs develop as schools implement programs on a dynamic basis. Many educators warn that these programs should be phased in slowly. Often, as parents talk with educators at the school and university levels about the possibility of establishing dual language programs, excitement reaches levels that inspire overzealous beginnings.

In some cases, dual language instruction has been adopted too quickly in schools. Instead of being phased in grade by grade (Lindholm & Molina, 1996), it is initiated at several levels or in multiple classrooms simultaneously. This places undue pressure on the English-speaking children, who are expected to adapt quickly to language learning during a school year and perform well, while at the same time they are evaluated by formal, standardized testing dictated by the district or state (Morse, 1999).

Phasing in two-way programs, perhaps as a school within a school, at one grade per year lays the groundwork for success. The program should be extended as the initial group of children is promoted to each subsequent grade level. If children begin a dual language program in kindergarten, they have more chance at success than those who begin at an intermediate grade where instruction is more highly complex and textbook reading becomes a major way to convey information. For those concerned about the English speaker hearing 90% of kindergarten instruction in a minority language (as with the 90/10 model), one must remember the importance of

from teachers who have responded to surveys and interview questions in the field of dual language instruction.

Teacher Training

Possibly the most important component of any program in bilingual education is teacher training. This issue is raised by teachers who have not been trained as bilingual teachers and often do not have access to teaching techniques, such as clear association with context or extensive use of para-linguistic cues, etc. The new relationship between English speaking and bilingual educators can be professionally stimulating; however, the success of the entire program can weigh heavily on the bilingual faculty. This makes it even more essential for the success of the program that the teaching staff have high quality training and materials rather than being expected to rely solely upon their bilingualism and creativity.

One example of the importance of teacher training is the mistaken belief by the untrained teacher that bilingual education is simply education in two languages. This can lead to the same instruction provided in each language, simply through translating lessons. However, concurrent translation provides minimal benefit for second language learners and can overtax the classroom teacher. A bilingual teacher who has not been trained in bilingual education and English as a Second Language (ESL) is at a decided disadvantage. Maintaining a high standard for any program might require a certain commitment from dual language teachers to attain bilingual and/or ESL certification.

Administrative Support

The role of school administrators is paramount, especially in schools where parents may be uninformed regarding the potential of dual language programs. Administrators can explain the nature of the program and the benefits for their children. When dual language teachers need support for creative solutions to pressing challenges or for additional access to resources and colleagues, the school administrator can be invaluable. As the head of the school, the administrator serves as a model for children, teachers, and parents. One group of teachers in a successful dual language school reported that their principal set aside the first few weeks of the school year in

order to meet with parents new to the dual language concept. Many parents worry about placing children in a pre-school setting where instruction will be in their weakest language. Majority language parents need the support of a dedicated administrator just as minority language parents have needed such support through the years.

The Role of Elicited Response

For educators trained in bilingual education for the language minority learner approaching acquisition of the majority language, elicited response has been approached very carefully (Montague & Meza-Zaragosa, 1999). For language minority learners, there is a constant threat posed by the social stigma of mispronouncing a word in the presence of peers fluent in the major language. However, with an English speaker learning Spanish, the socio-political dynamics are different. Teachers in dual language programs find that if they refrain from eliciting response too long, English speakers will not attempt to use their second language. The pressure for acquisition and production is not as strong because English can be used to negotiate in most other areas of life outside the classroom. One dual language teacher, at the intermediate level, reported that she pretended she could not understand English responses from children. Though this definitely appeared to promote second language production in her students, the social dynamics of this classroom may have changed due to her policy. This topic deserves more attention in the professional literature and from staff planning a dual language program.

Implementation of the Seven Components at the Early Childhood Development Center

Defining the Model

In the planning stages of the Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC), personnel decided that a 50/50 dual language model would be the program of choice. Because the ECDC was built to house only one classroom of each grade (prekindergarten age three to third grade), the implementation of the 50/50 model has varied.

In the three-year-old classroom, the teacher began the delivery of English instruction on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The Spanish instruction was given on Tuesdays and Thursdays. To ensure that the

children were receiving an equal amount of instruction in both languages, the teacher then switched her instructional schedule at mid-semester. Spanish instruction was then given on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The English instruction was switched to Tuesdays and Thursdays. The change did not impact the children negatively.

The teachers in the four-year-old and kindergarten classrooms took a different approach to the delivery of the 50/50 two-way language instructional program. At these grades, a multi-age configuration is in place. A certified bilingual teacher instructs the four-year-olds and the kindergarten students daily in Spanish while a teacher with an ESL certificate instructs the same children in English. The teachers plan the daily schedule so that the children receive 50 percent of their instruction in English and Spanish. This approach has also proven to be very successful.

The first and second grade teachers team-teach; however, the students are not multi-aged. The first grade teacher teaches reading/language arts integrated with social studies and science in English to first and second graders. The second grade teacher teaches Spanish reading/language arts integrated with social studies and mathematics to the first and second graders. The teachers have developed a schedule that equalizes the instructional time of both languages. Students move from one classroom to another. Transitional time is minimized because of the close proximity of the classrooms. This configuration has proven to be successful and conducive to student success.

Students in the third grade are self-contained. The teacher is currently utilizing a bilingual enrichment model to teach students in the Spanish language. Students receive their content instruction in science and social studies in Spanish.

Gradual Phase-In of Program

The Center opened in 1996 with three classrooms. Twenty-two three-, four-, and five-year-olds participated in the first dual language program in Corpus Christi. First and second grade classrooms were established the following year. Instruction at each grade level followed the philosophy of the two-way language program as written

by Virginia Collier, noted author in bilingual education (Collier, 1997 a & b). In 1998, a third grade classroom was created. Students currently enrolled in the Center then had the opportunity to participate in the program through third grade

The second emphasis of the ECDC is early childhood, a period generally accepted by educators and researchers to be from birth to age eight. For this reason, there are no immediate plans to expand the Center to include fourth and fifth grade in the future.

Instruction Reflecting Population

Students attending the ECDC are chosen by lottery. Applications are taken in February of each new year to create a new class of twenty-two three-year-olds. Children who are three years of age on or before September first and reside in the Corpus Christi Independent School District (CCISD) are eligible to apply for enrollment at the Center. Parents of children ages four to eight must also complete applications to be eligible to fill available slots at the higher-grade levels. Slots become available as families move out of the CCISD attendance zone, parents decide to have all siblings at one school location, or students violate CCISD attendance or behavior policies.

In accordance with the criteria on the application, children are placed in one of the four quadrants illustrated in Table 1. Approximately 63% of the students accepted to the ECDC fall in the at-risk category.

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Table 1
Distribution of ECDC Student Population

English Dominant Free Lunch	Spanish Dominant Free Lunch
7	7
English Dominant Non-Free Lunch	**Spanish Dominant Non-Free Lunch**
4	4

Utilizing this method of selecting the population allows for equal representation of children. There is a two-step process to the lottery. Students are first randomly selected based on language and socio-economic status. Next, students pass a language proficiency test in their first language. Children must score at a level C of proficiency based on the IDEA© Pre-Proficiency Test developed by Ballard & Tighe, Publishers. A level C score on the test indicates that the child is limited in either Spanish or English speaking skills. The ECDC accepts this score as an average score and an indication that the child has sufficient skills to be successful in a 50/50 dual language program (Ballard & Tighe, Publishers, 2001).

Because the program of record is based on a 50/50 dual language model, the student population should mirror the instructional delivery used by the teacher. An equal representation of each group strengthens instruction at the Center. Children are paired or placed equally in center situations so they can interact with one another in their first language. This strategy enables second language learners to be exposed to the second language in a non-threatening environment. Teachers reinforce the second language through small and whole group instruction.

Materials

One major benefit of the ECDC/CCISD partnership is that they share a common goal. The ECDC staff is afforded a myriad of materials to implement an effective dual language program. The Corpus Christi Independent School District's textbook adoption committee voted to adopt the English and Spanish version of the kindergarten program, *Kindergarten place,* developed by Scholastic, Inc. (2000). To provide consistency in programs, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi purchased prekindergarten programs available through Scholastic, Inc (2000). First, second, and third grade

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students use a basal reading program published by McGraw Hill (2001). The program is available in English and Spanish and is the District's adopted textbook.

In addition to these materials, the ECDC staff uses two Spanish programs made available through grants written by bilingual professors. *Estrellita Accelerated Beginning Spanish Reading* was developed and published by Karen Myer (1999). *Cancionero* was developed and published by Hampton-Brown (2000). These two programs are used by teachers in the prekindergarten four-year-old class to the third grade class. A program for the prekindergarten three-year-old class has been ordered for next school year. Both of these programs have a home-school connection to elicit parent involvement. Teachers also use *Pan y Canela* and *Elefonética* both published by Hampton Brown (2000), and additional ESL materials provided by both the university and the school district.

Each classroom houses a Spanish library and a variety of trade books. Harcourt Brace (1999) is the textbook of choice for students in kindergarten to grade three in the area of mathematics. Teachers have large quantities of manipulatives to enhance lessons in oral language development and mathematics.

Teacher Training

As noted in most educational journals, staff development is a key to successful programs and schools. Four of the six teachers currently at the ECDC are bilingual certified. One of the two other teachers is ESL certified and the second is currently working toward ESL certification.

All teachers are employees of the CCISD and as such are given the opportunity to attend bilingual and ESL workshops and inservices sponsored by CCISD each year. Another benefit of the university/public school partnership is that the university's bilingual professors also afford the staff the opportunity to participate in a variety of staff development experiences to strengthen bilingual instruction. Through CCISD's Title VII Program, the ECDC staff has also attended dual language retreats and symposiums, workshops that strengthen the teachers' Spanish grammar skills, and inservices that introduce valuable teaching strategies.

Administrative Support

In any effective school, the backing of an administrator is essential. The current administrator is an avid supporter of bilingual, ESL, and two-way language programs. She serves as a role model to students, parents, teachers, university students, and all others who pass through the school doors. She promotes the philosophies and goals of the program while always seeking new and innovative methods for the delivery of a quality education.

The Role of Elicited Response

Because of its commitment to the dual language program, the ECDC staff has implemented a program to help students understand that each language is equally valued. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday have been designated as Spanish Days. Teachers post signs on classroom doors and inside the classroom that read "*Esta es una escuela de estudiantes bilingües. Hoy es dia de español.*" (This is a school of bilingual students. Today is Spanish day.) Students are greeted and spoken to in Spanish throughout the building. Additionally, teachers utilize a 10 to 15 minute whole group strategy entitled *Noticias*. The exercise is a short oral language development activity used to reinforce students' knowledge of the Spanish language. Tuesday and Thursday are noted as the English Days and the same activities are implemented to reinforce English.

The implementation of language of the day practice helps eliminate the fear a second language learner might encounter in responding to a teacher, another student, or any other person in the building. It also tells students that both languages are valued equally. Setting high expectations for students and teachers in both languages enhances the education program.

Labeling items in classrooms also shows students that both languages are valued. Furthermore, it assists those students who might be reluctant to respond due to fear of mispronunciation or incorrect use of a word. Teachers use blue labels for English words and red labels for Spanish. Each classroom teacher uses a word wall to the same end.

Evaluation

Several instruments are used at the Center to evaluate the success of the program. The name of each test and its purpose are stated in Table 2.

Table 2
Assessment Instruments Used at the Early Childhood Development Center

	Purpose	Author/Publishers
Pre-Idea Proficiency Test (Pre-IPT)	To determine the language proficiency of a child in prekindergarten (3 to 5 years of age).	Ballard & Tighe (2001)
Idea Proficiency Test (IPT)	To determine the language proficiency of a child in kindergarten to sixth grade.	Ballard & Tighe (2001)
Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI)	To diagnose reading skill and comprehension development in the English language for kindergarten to second grade.	Texas Education Agency (2001) (State of Texas)
Tejas LEE	To diagnose reading skill and comprehension development in the Spanish language for kindergarten to second grade.	Texas Education Agency (2001) (State of Texas)
Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)	To determine the mastery of knowledge and skills in reading and mathematics in grade three	Texas Education Agency (2001) (State of Texas)

Analyses of the Pre-IPT and the IPT oral language assessments since the inception of the program have shown that most students'

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language skills either remain the same or increase. No regression has been noted in either language (Ballard & Tighe, 2001).

The Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) is administered twice a year to students in kindergarten, first and second grades. This diagnostic test measures a child's reading and comprehension abilities as "still developing" or "developed" based upon the mastery of certain concepts at each level of administration. The test consists of a screening and inventory section.

At the kindergarten level the screening section measures graphophonemic knowledge and phonemic awareness. The inventory evaluates the student on the following four concepts: (a) book and print awareness, (b) phonemic awareness (c) graphophonemic knowledge, and (d) listening comprehension.

The first grade-screening test measures graphophonemic knowledge, word reading, and phonemic awareness. First grade students are then administered the inventory section, which contains the following six concepts: phonemic awareness, graphophonemic knowledge, reading accuracy, reading fluency, listening comprehension, and reading comprehension.

The TPRI screening section at the second grade level measures only reading. In the inventory section, students are evaluated on graphophonemic knowledge, reading accuracy, reading fluency, and reading comprehension.

In September of 1999, Dr. Shelly Jackson conducted a study "Influence of Early Childhood Education on Reading Development As Measured by the Texas Primary Reading Inventory." Dr. Jackson used the TPRI as her measure of achievement. The results indicated that the students at the ECDC were benefiting from early literacy experiences. More recently, instructors have used the TPRI scores to individualize instruction for increased student achievement and to monitor performance so that all students are reading on grade level by the third grade, a goal established by the Governor of Texas (TEA, 2001).

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) was administered to students in first and second grade in the spring of 1998. First grade scores in reading and math were at the fiftieth percentile or better; second grade scores were well below the fiftieth percentile. In the spring of 1999, both grades improved in the reading area. Second grade math scores improved by 57 percentage points and first grade math scores were maintained from the previous year (see Table 3).

Language arts scores in second grade improved by 51 percentage points. The language arts section of the test is not given to first graders. In the 1999-2000 school year, the Corpus Christi Independent School District ceased the administration of the ITBS because its norming timelines had expired.

Table 3
ECDC Students' Performance on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, 1998-1999

Grade	Reading		Math		Language Arts	
	1998	1999	1998	1999	1998	1999
First	55	65	56	56		
Second	28	65	17	74	17	68

Third grade students are administered the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) in the areas of reading and mathematics. Table 4 illustrates the scores from spring assessment, 1999 to 2000. Reading scores dropped from 1999 to 2000 by five percent and math scores increased from 86% in 1999 to 94% in 2000. Test results from the spring 2001 assessment indicate an increase in both reading and math. These results earned the ECDC state ratings of "Recognized" in 1999 and "Exemplary" in 2000. The ECDC received an "Exemplary" rating again in 2001 (TEA, 1999; TEA, 2000; TEA, 2001).

Table 4

Performance of ECDC Third-Grade Students on Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, 1999-2001

Year of Administration	Reading	Math	State Rating
1999	100	86	Recognized
2000	95	94	Exemplary
2001	100	100	Exemplary

Beyond standardized testing, transformational leaders at the ECDC use portfolio assessment to gauge student learning in both languages. As a research facility, the ECDC leaders will continue to seek effective means of assessing the viability of programs. However, past and current methods used have proven the program to be successful.

Conclusion

The ECDC staff will continue to refine and redefine best practices in the area of bilingual/dual language programs. Their goals as educators are to: (1) have students leave the Center as academically successful at age eight, and (2) develop effective teaching strategies and methodologies grounded in research that can be replicated and utilized by educators at local, state and national levels.

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